International flights from Madurai

485. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to permit international flights from and to Madurai Airport this year;

(b) whether any airlines have evinced interest;

(c) whether there is any proposals to introduce international operation from any other non-metro airports in the country this year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Introduction of international operation by Indian and foreign carriers from metro and non-metro airports is a continuous process. At present the foreign airlines are operating 290 frequencies per week to/from non-metro cities in India. There is no proposal for international flights to/from Madurai airport for the present.

Growth in air traffic

486. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's congested airports could get chocked because they are not upgraded;

(b) whether rising income levels and growing global interest among Indians, are expected to result in a 21.6 per cent annual growth in passenger traffic over next five years;

(c) if so, the total number of airports at present in operation and how many have not been so far upgraded;

(d) whether due to higher economic growth domestic air travel is expected to grow significantly;

(e) whether our airports at present are unable to accommodate the passengers; and

(f) the concrete steps, Government proposes to take to make all the airports functionable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a), (b) and (e) There has been an unprecedented growth in air traffic in recent years, which in term of international and domestic passengers for the previous 4 years (in %) is: 2003-04 - 11.2 and 12.4; 2004-05 - 18 and 24; 2005-06 - 16.8 and 29.6 and 2006-07 - 15.9 and 42 respectively. This growth has thrown up challenges for airport infrastructure, specially at busy airports at Delhi and Mumbai.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) manages 133 airports which includes 28 Civil Enclaves at Defence Airfields and provides Communication, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS) and Air Traffic Management (ATM) to six other airports. The total number of operational airports including Civil Enclaves is 90. Proposals are initiated by AAI for upgradation of infrastructure at some of its non-operating airfields.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(f) some of the important steps undertaken/being undertaken for upgradation of airport infrastructure in the country are: (i) Construction of new airports at Hyderabad and Bangalore in Public Private Partnership; (ii) Modernisation of Delhi and Mumbai airports through Joint Venture route; (iii) Modernisation of Kolkata and Chennai airports by AAI; (iv) Modernisation of 35 non-metro airports by AAI; (v) 'In principle' approvals have been accorded for new airports at Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra, Mopa in Goa, and Kannur in Kerala and a passenger & cargo hub at Nagpur; and (vi) Setting up of three Greenfield airports and upgradation of existing airports in North Eastern States.

License to airports

487. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that of the eighty-two operational airports in the country, only nineteen have licences granted by the Ministry, despite the fact that as per International Civil Aviation Organization rules, airports are required to have licence to handle international flights;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the list of nineteen licensed airports includes all the privatised airports and many of the airports under the control of Airports Authority of India (AAI); and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to accelerate the process of granting licence to all operational airports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) The licensing of airports has been taken up by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on priority in a phased manner. Till now, licenses under 'Public Use' category have been issued for 20 airports, including 13 international airports managed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), while 19 airports have been licensed under 'Private Use' category.

Cramming of airspace

488. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the exponential growth of airlines and passengers has crammed the airspace over Indian cities and situation below at airports is making even driving crew cars and taxing unsafe;

(b) whether it is also a fact that airports built decades ago, designed to handle a lower traffic of flights daily are now witnessing movement of much larger number of aircrafts and support vehicles of airlines; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to ensure safe airside for passengers and crew?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The unprecendented growth in air traffic in past 3 years has raised